

Frutkin, Mark,
The Growing Dawn
Dunvegan, Ontario: Quadrant Editions, 1983.

Herman, Edward S.,
The Real Terror Network: Terrorism in Fact and Propaganda
Montreal: Black Rose Books, 1985.

Kaminisky, Stuart M., with Jeffrey M. Mahan,
American Television Genres.
Chicago: Nelson-Hall, 1985.

Each of these volumes, in its own way, contributes to a better understanding of the media. Each will certainly find its defenders and detractors. Together they are a trilogy of poetry, polemics and pedantry.

Frutkin's book is a lyrical journey through Marconi's life to the dawn of broadcast communications. The presentation is imaginative and metaphorical. Frutkin calls it a "documentary fiction." Readers seeking strong analytic or narrative structures will find this book disappointing. The artistically minded will find themselves usually entertained and often interacting with the questions raised by Frutkin's dramatic image of Marconi--at times navigating, at times drifting--on an electronic sea. While the author warns in his introduction that "...most of what follows is fact and all of it is true, insofar as this author is granted a vision of truth," the reader is left to parse the visions of truth within the metaphoric imagery of the presentation.

Although perhaps more academically rewarding, Edward Herman's Real Terror Network can be as polemic as Frutkin is poetic. Herman hands us a thoughtful and well-documented response to studies like Sterling's The Terror Network and Laquer's Terrorism. Herman's study presents a convincing case for his thesis that American-backed client states in the Third World have unleashed a reign of terror that systematically kidnaps, murders and tortures tens of thousands of people a year. He argues that there is a necessary relationship

between American developmental clientele and this kind of officially sanctioned terrorism.

Herman's documentation of the annual cost in human lives of American Third World involvement is shocking. His book also offers a strong attack on the combination of naive complicity, bias and apology for official terrorism found in the American press. While some readers may find the sarcasm and apparent polemic of Herman's presentation jarring at times, his argument and its evidence are nevertheless thoroughly stimulating.

Overall, American Television Genres is a pale contrast to Kaminsky's earlier book, American Film Genres. American Television Genres falls short of its goal to explore the differences and similarities between the two media "in order to identify how to criticize television most effectively." It does, however, offer an interesting mixture of theory and observation which will stimulate readers to consider various critical alternatives.

The major weaknesses are the author's failure to convince us that an analytical problem for television criticism really exists and, further, to explore comparatively the various solutions. The sheer variety of critical perspectives, from Frye to Freud, gives the book its most notable strength. However, readers may come away feeling that the data were chosen to fit, rather than test, some of the theories.

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